



Montana Library Association Direct State Aid to Public Libraries

During the 2013 legislative session the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 203 which was sponsored by the Montana Library Association. This bill called for a statutory increase in the amount of state aid funding for public libraries to .40 cents per person – an increase of .30 cents per person from the state aid amount prior to this biennium. The legislature placed a sunset clause on the increased funding. Currently, the increase is set to expire June 30, 2017 or after FY 17.

What is state aid per capita/per square mile?

- State aid is state general fund dollars appropriated by the Legislature to support public libraries as mandated by Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 22-1-327. The amount of state aid that each library receives is based on a formula of population and area served that is described in the Administrative Rules of Montana.
- To receive state aid the library must meet the "Essential" public library standards found in Administrative Rules (ARM) 10.102.1150 A - 10.102.1150 M.

In general Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 22-1-326 asks that the money

- Broaden access to existing information by strengthening public libraries and public library districts;
- Augment and extend services provided by public libraries and public library districts; and
- Permit new types of library services based on local need.

State Aid is tied to Montana's Public Library Standards. The following are some highlights submitted by librarians across the state that illustrate how the increase in state aid has positively impacted their libraries and communities as well as improved a library's ability to meet or exceed a Public Library Standard's level.

Joliet Public Library: The Joliet Public Library was able to support a new program for students in the form of Student Book Clubs thanks to increased state aid funding. We were able to use the funding to purchase book sets that are being used by seven (7) new Student Book Clubs. These book clubs meet on a monthly basis. Grade levels range from Kindergarten to High School. The books club sets that JPL has made available to these books clubs ensure that the cost of buying a new book each month will not deter a student from participating. We currently have 33 students and 7 facilitators participating in this program, and look forward to using this funding in future years to increase the titles available to the Student Book Clubs.

Through student participation in the book clubs we have also seen an increase in parental use of the library while the students are participating in their book clubs. This activity has introduced new patrons to the JPL while improving the reading skills of the students. This program has resulted in encouraging recreational reading in the students. They can hardly wait to get to book club each month. We have

heard from their parents and teachers alike that they have seen an increased enthusiasm for both reading and school.

George McCone Memorial County Library – Circle, MT: The funding from state aid per capita was \$1526.13, compared to around \$396.00 in past years. We were able to fund several projects as a result of this increase:

- The library has been having structural problems and the commissioners requested that we send out a survey to see how county residents felt about purchasing a new building or repairing the one we are in now. With the extra per capita dollars, we were able to send out surveys, with a post paid return envelope, to all residents of McCone County. Based upon survey responses repairs on the existing building began on June 21, 2014. Sending out surveys prompted the commissioners to help us apply for a loan to cover the cost of fixing the structure of our building and we look forward to offering a much safer place for our patrons to visit.
- There is a limited budget for our Children's Reading programs and we used a portion of the per capita money to buy supplies and prizes for the Summer Reading program.
- We purchased a new computer for the Library Director.
- A new program for adults entitled "Tea Time" was introduced. Participants meet weekly.

Next year, the additional state aid funding will be used to offer computer classes on the Internet, Excel and Word.

Rosebud County Library – Forsyth, MT: With increased funding the Rosebud County Library installed a color copier. This is a much-needed service which will improve the quality of life for people here. It will benefit both the library and the people of a large rural geographic area. The town of Forsyth and the entire surrounding area, including not only northern Rosebud County but also Treasure County, have never had a color copier.

Now, thanks to state aid plus some capital purchase funds from the county, Rosebud County Library copier will reduce expenses for ink cartridges for the library and it will offer a service our local people have never had here. People are so excited about printing everything from garage sale signs to family fliers to better looking resumes. This is a real service to our community and a good example of how state aid can enable us to offer something of real benefit which we otherwise could not afford. Thank you, Montana State Legislature and Governor Bullock!

Wedsworth Memorial Library – Cascade, MT: Wedsworth Memorial Library serves the communities of Cascade, Ulm, the Missouri River Canyon, Dearborn, Craig and Wolf Creek. With increased state aid funding the library joined the state consortium MontanLibrary2Go, providing access to downloadable e-books and audiobooks that include over 10,000 eBook and audiobook titles that patrons can download onto their electronic device without having to physically go to the library to check out the material. Due to Wedsworth Library's proximity to rural communities, an aging population and the homebound, the library's goal for this new service to library patrons, including the sight-impaired, is to provide access to a greater range of reading material using the latest technology. Access to these materials will greatly improve the quality of life and lessen the isolation of these individuals. Also, many in the greater community live several miles outside of the town limits. This service would provide a means of accessing reading materials without having to leave their home.

Harlem Public Library: With the additional state aid funding the library purchased an LCD projector that will support presentations by guest for programs, computer and professional development trainings, and community meetings.

Boulder Community Library: We used the increase in State Aid in FY 2013-14 to purchase two new computers and to expand our storytime programs.

- We purchased one of the computers primarily for the adult section of the library. Many adults in the area have been laid off and are now job searching and/or continuing their education online. These activities take a lot of time and many were frustrated with how long the wait was. The new computer definitely helps with the wait.
- The second computer was purchased for our afterschool "Lego Club". They have entered into the world of robotics and what a fun way to learn about computer programming! We average 16 kids at every meeting. **That is 16 kids that are safe, learning something new, and learning to work as a team.**
 - We were able to reach out to many people with thanks to the new computers. We are now proctoring exams for college students, having health care navigators come and sign people up for health insurance and have our kids learning about computer programming.
- We took the remaining proceeds and purchased supplies for our storytimes. We bought a felt board, purchased board books for "Books and Babies", sensory bins for the kids to explore in, and craft supplies for the kids to make and take home.

Belgrade Community Library: Belgrade Community Library has developed and adopted, for the very first time, a long needed and overdue modest Technology Plan. We have had no succession plan for technology and absolutely no funding to improve upon or add new technology. The State Aid funding is helping us put our computers on a graduated replacement plan. In the past we tried to continue fixing broken hardware and patching problems that would not, in reality, go away. Now we are hopeful that a replacement plan will eliminate wasted dollars on technology maintenance due to outdated hardware. More efficient systems are delivering better service to our patrons. (See attached)

North Valley Public Library – Stevensville: Our increase in State Aid allowed us to add more hours per week for our Youth Services Specialist in FY 2013-2014. We were also able to increase our FY 2014-2015 budget to cover the costs of new summer programs for youth.

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The additional hours per week allowed our Youth Services Specialist to substantially increase our Summer Reading Program. In the past, our library has had a reading contest combined with one weekly program. Past themes included natural sciences, gardening and wildlife studies. This year, with our increased funds, we continued our reading contest and added 3 summer programs that each met on a weekly basis: Story Time, Youth Garden Club and Summer Science Club. We were able to cover the supply costs for each of these groups and all activities were free to the public.

Our most important accomplishment was the creation and success of our Youth Garden Club. Our group began in May and will continue until the end of the growing season. Children of all ages were able to

participate in this group together, and the participants were a diverse and varied group who normally would not be together in our previous programs.

Children came from homeschool families, public schools, long-time residents and new arrivals, and ranged in age from 4-17 years. Parents and local gardening experts, including Stevensville Community Garden's leader, Colleen Miller, came together to support the children, share their knowledge and make each activity fun and educational. Our Youth Garden Club provided something for everyone. Our youngest members learned the basics...planting seeds properly, watering, weeding and harvesting. Older children and more experienced gardeners explored the complexities of soil composition, plant structure, pest management and garden chemistry.

Finally, each participant was able to interact with their community in a natural and new way. Beginning in June, our club harvested our own produce each week. Children took what they wanted home, and they donated the rest each week to the Free Lunch Program and our local Food Bank. This program taught valuable skills to each participant, and enabled them to provide for themselves and help others at the same time.

ImagineIF Kalispell: We have several initiatives made possible, in part, by our 2013-2014 State Aid. One of those is our Programming and Outreach Librarian. After reorganizing post-retirement staff duties, we were able to upgrade a staff position from a library assistant to a Professional Librarian. We hired a Programming and Outreach Librarian in December 2013. This position is responsible for monthly experience zones for adults, young adults, and families.

We have partnered with the Flathead FFA to build chicken coops in the library that were later raffled off to participants. We had a bike week, where local businesses brought in repair equipment and showed participants how to fix their own bikes. With our new outreach librarian we were also able to co-sponsor with Flathead Valley Community College the first ever Mini Maker Faire in Montana that saw over 600 participants of every age category.

All of our Experience Zones are about making unexpected connections, self-sufficiency, and fun. One of the side benefits of the bike experience zone was the Fire Department reading about it and coming over with free bike helmets for kids as part of their safety outreach. A mom and two kids came in to get their bike fixed and when asked if the kids had helmets she sheepishly replied, "No, I haven't been able to get those yet." She and the kids were thrilled and grateful when we produced the fire-department-supplied helmets for the kids. (see photo below). The FFA students loved that they could help smaller kids and adults learn to use power screw drivers and such to build the chicken coops. Like the mini Maker Faire, it was a truly multi-generational, community event.

Having an outreach librarian brings the library to the community. We're no longer thought of as a quiet, old-fashioned, rule-laden, dusty old building filled with mean librarians and tattered books. We're hip and fun and the community now expects (and receives!) interesting and enlightening experiences whenever they encounter us in the community or in the library. **Our program attendance is up 44% system wide and our checkouts are up nearly 7%. Lives are being enriched by the services we provide.**